

All of the sudden now they want to say they have discovered there is a surplus in Social Security. Well, to tell you the truth, we have always known there was a surplus in Social Security. In fact, the Republican Party over the last 5 years has taken \$650 billion out of the Social Security trust fund. And now they want to act like recent converts that we are going to keep the surplus for Social Security.

Democrats have said for well over 70 years, and as recently as 1998, save Social Security first. Do not go waste it on tax cuts for the wealthy. Do not waste that money. It is dedicated. It has been paid with the commitment for Social Security; and so now today under a new discovery, Republicans have realized that there is a surplus in Social Security. They are going to dedicate it, they say, to Social Security. But the problem is the President of the United States was in West Virginia just a short time ago, less than 2 months ago and said there is no surplus in Social Security.

I am sure within short order they will all collectively get their stories straight and figure out whether there is or is not a surplus. But whatever you do, do me one favor, just pay back the \$650 billion you have taken out of that Social Security trust fund that good, hard-working Americans who rely on it just like my colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN), just a moment ago spoke about they rely on the Social Security checks. Forty percent of the households in America have no other retirement plan plus Social Security; 80 percent of small business employees in this country have no other retirement account plus Social Security. They rely on the checks they pay and the money they pay every month or bi-monthly into the trust fund.

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So as you become recent believers that there is a surplus, you have been practicing some of the great absconding of resources; \$650 billion over the last 5 years you have taken out of that account.

I did not see anything about that in today's paper as some were touting that in their plan, but I am sure as they come to figure out their math that they will realize they owe some money back before they talk about integrity of the Social Security surplus.

Clearly, the American people understand that. So before we try to privatize Social Security or do anything fundamentally to alter the Social Security trust fund, the first thing we should do is guarantee that Social Security is there for future generations. To date, the President has yet to make a proposal, and the half-baked plan being out touted by the House and Senate today fundamentally misses the same objective.

The goal here is to strengthen Social Security. The head of the General Accountability Office, when testifying in

front of the Committee on Ways and Means, said the President's plan on privatization would actually exacerbate the issue of Social Security's solvency. The goal is not to change Social Security. The goal is not to exacerbate its solvency. The goal is to strengthen Social Security.

That is why the first order of business is return the \$650 billion. Both the President's past ideas and the plans talked about today would exacerbate the problem of Social Security solvency.

What we should deal with is the shortage of savings in this country, by the fact that Americans are stretched thin, they do not have the capability to save for their retirement because they are meeting their housing needs, their educational needs, their health care needs that are becoming more and more stressful on the paycheck, to get them from the 1st of the month to the 31st of the month.

There are ideas that exist out there. As I told you, 80 percent of all small business employees have no plan outside of Social Security. Social Security is their retirement plan. In 40 percent of all households in America, Social Security is the only retirement they can rely on, and I will tell you this as a Member of Congress, who represents people in the airline industry, specifically United Airlines, after what happened to their retirement plans that they saved for, one thing I can tell you about that is the United Airlines employees are happy Social Security is there. They like the security that comes with Social Security.

The ideas that we as Democrats have offered, let me run through them quickly, Mr. Speaker, if I can: automatic enrollment in 401(k)s for all Americans; direct deposit of tax refunds into personal savings accounts; a government match for the first \$2,000 you save, matching it 50 percent; a universal 401(k) to simplify the 16 different savings plans that exist on the Tax Code.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are not fools. They rejected the President's privatization of Social Security. They will reject this half-baked plan. To put it simply, people like the security that comes with Social Security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMAN of New York). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WELDON of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GINGREY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOCIAL SECURITY AND INEQUITIES TOWARD WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about the challenges women face to a safe and secure retirement. Without changes to the Social Security program, this Congress will continue to uphold outdated policies and programs that actually punish working women, divorced women, and widows.

Every Member of Congress, regardless of which side of the aisle they are on, have seen the statistics that Social Security will be bankrupt in 2041, and that if changes are not made, all Americans will have guaranteed benefit cuts of more than 25 percent. That is right; if no changes are made, guaranteed benefits will be cut by 25 percent.

However, what the media and political pundits have not touched on is the effect Social Security reform will have on women in particular.

To begin with, Mr. Speaker, I would like to stress three important facts about American women and their retirement years.

First, women are more likely to live in poverty during their retirement years than are men.

Second, women are also comparatively more likely to rely on Social Security for the majority of their retirement income.

Third, Social Security's future cash shortfalls pose a heightened and disproportionate threat to women's retirement security.

Social Security is a plan that actually was designed in a much different time, in a different era, and with a different set of American demographics in mind.